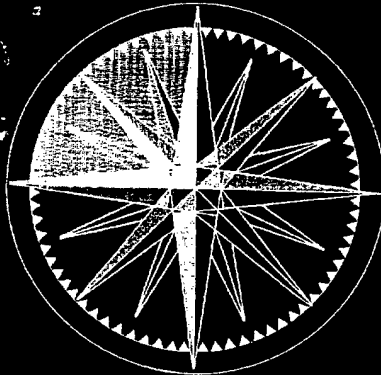


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SPECIAL REPORT

FOREIGN OPERATIONS OF CHINESE COMMUNIST NEWS AGENCY

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FOREIGN OPERATIONS OF CHINESE COMMUNIST NEWS AGENCY

Peiping's propaganda arm, the New China News Agency (NCNA), reaches to every corner of the globe, advertising Communist China's successes, cloaking its shortcomings, and trumpeting the militant course in the world-wide polemical struggle with the Soviet Union. Often described as the "eyes and ears" of the Chinese Communist Party, NCNA serves as Peiping's primary overseas collector of overt intelligence. In addition, NCNA men are often called upon to perform quasi-diplomatic duties and to undertake espionage activities.

For the Chinese Communists, diplomatically re-buffed in many countries, especially in Latin America and Africa, the agency provides Peiping's only official point of contact. More than once NCNA offices have proven valuable steppingstones to the establishment of broader diplomatic and economic relations.

Background

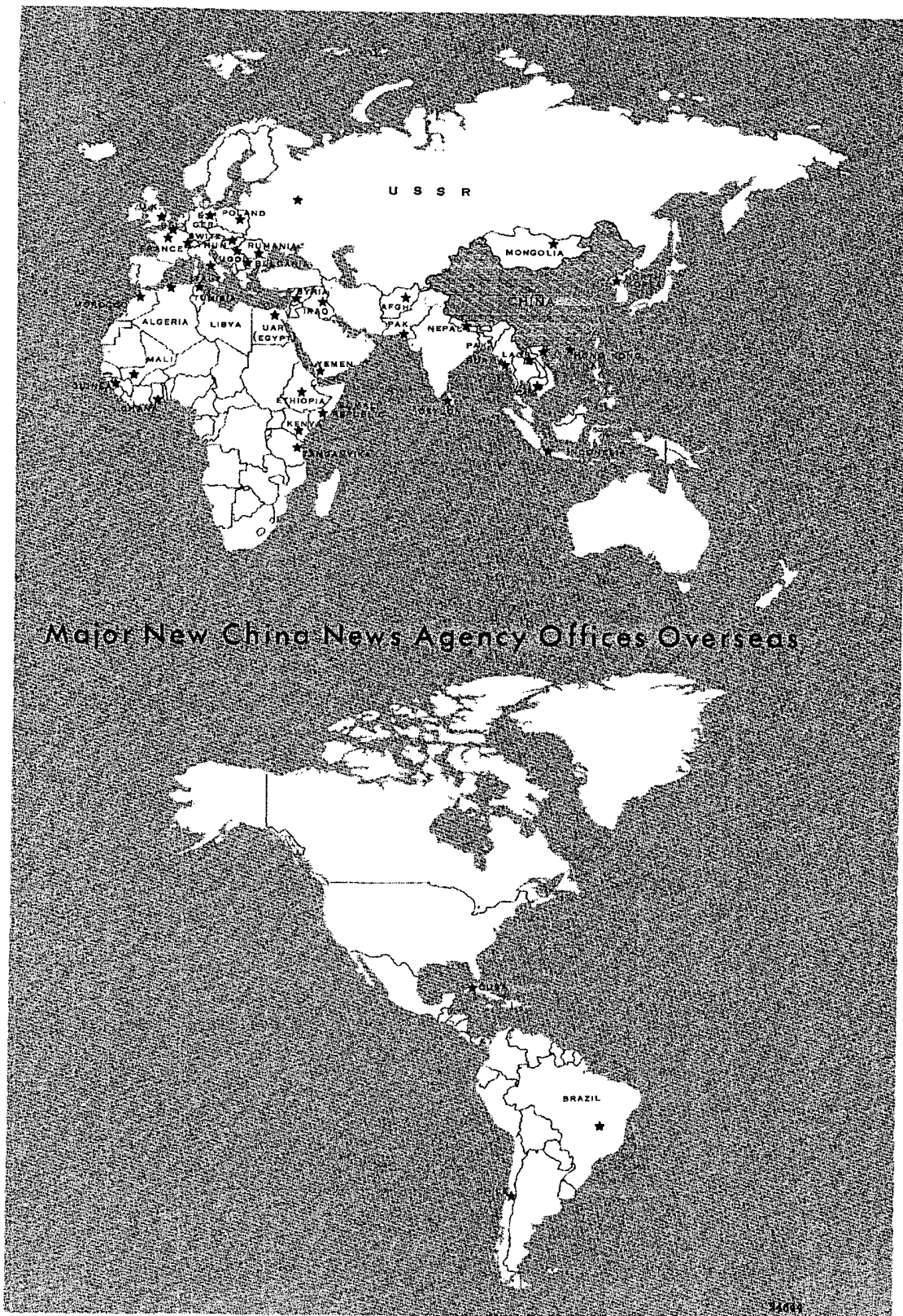
NCNA is not a news service in the generally accepted Western sense. It is not an independent organization collecting news, processing it, and passing it along to subscribers; like other bloc news organizations it is primarily a political tool of the government and party. As Peiping's party propagandist Liu Ting-yi said in 1957 on NCNA's 20 anniversary, "NCNA, like the party, the government, the army, and the courts, is a weapon of class struggle." In Liu's words, the NCNA reporter must understand politics and always be ready to consider politically what to rush and what to repress, what to take and what to leave."

NCNA began as RCNA, the Red China News Agency, in the 1930s

--a small propaganda outlet that fed material to the local press in areas of the mainland controlled by the Communists at that time. After 1937 and the agreement to join with the Kuomintang in a united front against the Japanese, the party played down its Communist label, and the name was changed from "Red" to "New." Growth was slow but steady. In the early 1940s NCNA began foreign broadcasts in English, and before the end of World War II it had started daily Morse transmissions overseas, putting heavy emphasis on the Communist war effort against Japan--the common enemy of the English-speaking world.

NCNA opened its first overseas office in Prague in 1948. After the Communists gained full control over the Chinese mainland the following year, the

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agency's operations abroad expanded rapidly. Posts were soon opened in nonbloc capitals such as Djakarta, Rangoon, and New Delhi. By late 1963 it had more than 40 additional offices, staffed by more than 100 Chinese nationals as well as by locally hired stringers.

From the beginning the Chinese have been plagued with personnel difficulties. It has often been extremely difficult to locate politically reliable men with journalistic skill and foreign language competence. NCNA has set up schools of journalism at several universities, but their emphasis appears to be on political orthodoxy, with journalistic facility taking a back seat. The course of study provides a heavy dose of Marxist-Leninist theory and a six-month stint on a newspaper desk. Political reliability is further instilled by party committee sessions in the various governmental offices to which future NCNA correspondents are assigned after graduation.

To cope with the flood of incoming material, NCNA's Peiping headquarters has about 2,000 employees. Approximately 20 percent of all home office staffers are said to be members of the party, and the agency is saturated with party personnel at the higher levels. Key liaison is probably conducted by Wu Leng-hsi, NCNA director and editor-in-chief of People's Daily. Over-all party supervision of NCNA affairs is probably in the hands of two members

of the politburo: propaganda department chief Liu Ting-yi, and Chen Po-ta, Liu's deputy and editor of the party journal.

At NCNA headquarters, party members sit on the editorial board of the Foreign News Department, overseeing selection and retransmission of a hundred thousand words a day from their own correspondents abroad and foreign radiobroadcasts. Above the Foreign News Department is a Central Editorial Committee which directs over-all policy and maintains close liaison with party and government propaganda organs. Because much of the incoming material is useful to the foreign trade and foreign affairs ministries, representatives of these organizations probably work closely with the editorial committee.

Diplomatic Activities

While NCNA's avowed purpose is the collection of news and the dissemination of Peiping's party line, agency representatives have frequently figured in some of Communist China's most notable diplomatic successes. NCNA's usefulness abroad and its close ties with the Foreign Ministry are strikingly illustrated in the career of Tseng Tao, Peiping's present ambassador to Algeria and apparently a key figure in Tunisia's recent agreement to establish diplomatic relations with the Chinese.

Tseng, a protégé of Foreign Minister Chen Yi and fast riser

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in Peiping's diplomatic ranks, went overseas first as an NCNA correspondent in Cuba and earned high marks for his work there. It was Tseng who handled all of China's early relations with the Castro regime. As chief of the Havana NCNA office, it was he who conducted the negotiations leading to recognition, and it was he who signed the joint communiqué announcing the agreement to establish diplomatic relations. Tseng also, in the fall of 1960, hosted China's National Day reception in Havana and performed all the functions of senior Peiping representative until the arrival of a chargé d'affaires some three months after diplomatic relations were established.

In Mexico, which denies that it will recognize Communist China at this time but is moving toward closer contacts with Peiping, NCNA is spearheading the drive for permanent representation. The temporary visas granted agency representatives who arrived last summer to cover a trade fair now have been renewed, and the government is permitting them unlimited travel to and from Mexico. Not only will China's propaganda activities be stepped up in neighboring Central America, but a permanent NCNA office in Mexico City is probable.

In Canada, where closer contacts with Peiping are also being discussed, the Chinese have proposed the establishment of an NCNA office--an opening wedge in the long effort to gain

more formal representation. In Italy and West Germany they are seeking acceptance of Chinese Communist press representatives. One of Peiping's main objectives there may be to establish new points of contact with European Communist parties.

Sino-Soviet Dispute and NCNA

Peiping has increasingly employed NCNA to wage the polemical struggle with the USSR.

During the summer of 1963, when the Sino-Soviet dispute erupted into the open, the NCNA apparatus was used to distribute inflammatory anti-Soviet propaganda in bloc countries. By late August the Czechs had clamped down, shutting the Prague office--China's oldest in Eastern Europe and a major center of operations. NCNA men were expelled, and China's leases on telegraph lines linking Peiping, Prague, and Havana were terminated. Prague had been a major relay point for propaganda directed to Africa and Latin America, and the work of the Prague office was hurriedly transferred to Geneva and London.

Another function of NCNA officials has been to contact and assist pro-Chinese splinter groups in orthodox pro-Soviet Communist parties around the world.

In Belgium, for example, the NCNA office was established with the aid of local Communist leader Jacques Grippa. Grippa

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was later shorn of his party office, but his pro-Peiping dissidents maintain close contact with NCNA and reportedly receive Chinese financial support.

The Paris NCNA chief [] received [] instructions on the conduct of the anti-Soviet campaign in Western Europe. Peiping ordered him to concentrate on locating Frenchmen, Soviets, and Germans who disagree with Moscow. In March 1963, NCNA in Paris had reportedly employed a local printing firm to reprint and distribute key People's Daily attacks on the Soviet Union.

The NCNA office in Italy, staffed by Italian Communists, reportedly has been able to dodge supervision and control by pro-Soviet elements in the Italian party. It produces a daily bulletin purveying anti-Moscow venom and has arranged publication of a pro-Peiping propaganda magazine, Cina d'Oggi, on printing equipment financed by the Chinese Embassy in Bern.

Covert Activities

Espionage is not one of NCNA's primary functions, and the scope of the agency's operations outside of Asia appears too limited to support a major espionage capability. Most offices are staffed by only one or two men, who have their hands full collecting information and disseminating propaganda. Moreover, covert operations if detected might jeopardize NCNA's

status with the host governments and may therefore be considered not worth the risk at this time. As NCNA's foreign operations are enlarged, the Chinese will probably be increasingly tempted to employ journalistic cover for clandestine operations.

All NCNA offices probably conduct some undercover activity, however. In Latin America and Western Europe they reportedly finance the activities of dissident pro-Peiping factions in local communist parties and foot the bill for printing presses to publicize China's position in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Many NCNA offices apparently handle larger sums of money than needed for daily journalistic expenses and in some places they employ larger staffs than would appear warranted by a normal information processing function. In Hong Kong, for example, NCNA has upwards of 100 personnel.

In France, NCNA officials are in liaison with representatives of the clandestine Spanish Communist Party and smuggle translated Chinese propaganda material into Spain. They reportedly have also tried on several occasions to obtain details of Western military maneuvers in Europe. In Rio de Janeiro, the NCNA office is reportedly funding and advising the clandestine activities of the Sino-Brazilian Cultural Society.

Some individual NCNA representatives are reputed to be managers of extensive espionage networks, but the evidence is

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usually circumstantial. Kao Liang, the NCNA man in Tanganyika, [redacted]

[redacted] travels widely and has often visited Uganda, Kenya, and Burundi. He appears to have had contact with Zanzibar's new pro-Communist leaders, and one of his frequent trips to the island coincided with the recent coup.

Other NCNA Activities

NCNA correspondents are more active and personable than many of Peiping's rather wooden diplomats and are able to move about more freely. They join local leftist organizations and frequently appear as lecturers, talking up China's achievements to Overseas Chinese, as well as local student and cultural groups. They frequently recruit translators for the Foreign Language Press in Peiping and occasionally succeed in persuading technically skilled Chinese to return to the mainland from the free world.

NCNA representatives serve as Peiping's prime travel promoters abroad, signing up promising young leaders for expense-paid tours of China and tapping left-wing students for study programs. In France, NCNA officers

are reportedly trying to interest National Assembly deputies in sightseeing trips to China.

Every day Peiping sends out a file of material either by commercial cable or dictation-speed newscasts. In most countries where there are NCNA offices, this material is then written up in a daily bulletin and circulated to local newspapers and diplomatic representatives. These handouts provide selective coverage of Asian events and developments in the West--touting Peiping's activities and heaping abuse on the US and its allies and on Soviet revisionism.

The daily bulletin has on occasion even gone so far as to take potshots at the host government. During the 1959 dispute with Indonesia over the treatment of Overseas Chinese, the publication frequently denounced local Indonesian authorities. In India the NCNA publications began derogatory comment in 1960 and finally grew so inflammatory that in 1963 New Delhi forced their suspension.

Immediate Outlook

It seems likely, however, that there will be fewer such displays of international bad

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manners by NCNA in the months ahead.

Peiping has apparently embarked on a new political offensive designed to build Chinese Communist prestige abroad and to construct a broader base for the continuing conflict with the Soviet Union. A display of greater flexibility in dealing with the non-Communist world--except for the US--and a return to something like the "Bandung spirit" of 1955 may be in prospect.

Although Peiping's east wind will continue to lash at

Washington with unabated force, it seems likely to blow more gently for a time in other quarters. The maneuvers leading up to French recognition appear to be part of this developing shift in the political weather, calculated to enlarge the Chinese presence in the free world and thus to demonstrate the growth of independent power in Peiping. NCNA, as the cutting edge of Chinese efforts to enlarge representation by infiltration and persuasion, can be expected to keep pace with Peiping's new forward policy.

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